

Application No.: 09/837,550**Docket No.: 30003036-4 US****Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (*Currently amended*) A shopping assistance method, comprising the following steps carried out by a service system upon receipt of a shopping enquiry ~~[[from]]~~ sent by a remote enquirer:

obtaining the geographic location of the enquiry device;

~~attributing an~~ selecting from multiple enquirer-independent functional significance ~~to significances known to the service system, a functional significance for the enquiry location by carrying out a first location-dependent database search using the enquiry-~~
device geographic location as input;

determining a geographical search parameter ~~by using the enquirer-independent in~~
dependence both on the enquiry-device location and its selected functional significance of the enquiry location;

finding an answer to the shopping enquiry by carrying out a second location-dependent database search, ~~the second search being carried out by using the~~
geographical search parameter to control the geographical coverage of the search; and

returning the search results to the enquirer device.

2. (*Previously presented*) A method according to claim 1, wherein the geographical search parameter specifies at least one of the following:

a particular shopping zone;

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a predetermined geographic area for the search;

a geographic range for the search;

one or more geographic foci for the search.

3. *(Cancelled)*

4. *(Previously presented)* A method according to claim 1, wherein the first location-dependent database search includes checking a database of traders and their locations.

5-15. *(Cancelled)*

16. *(Previously presented)* A method according to claim 1, wherein the service system has a database of local traders giving their locations and contact details of their on-line database systems, the second location-dependent search including consulting the database of local traders and then contacting the on-line database systems of the traders determined as being within the geographical coverage set for the search and trading in items at least of the general type relevant to the enquiry.

17-20. *(Cancelled)*

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21. (Currently amended) A shopping-assistance service system, comprising:

an input subsystem for receiving a shopping enquiry ~~[[from]]~~ sent by a remote enquirer using an enquiry device;

a location subsystem for determining the geographic location of the enquiry device;

a first database subsystem for carrying out a first location-dependent search using the enquiry-device geographic location as input, to ~~attribute an~~ selected from enquirer-independent functional significance to significances recorded in the first database subsystem, a functional significance for the enquiry-device location;

a second database subsystem for carrying out a second location-dependent search to find an answer to the shopping enquiry using ~~the enquirer-independent~~ both the enquiry-device location and its selected functional significance to control the geographical coverage of the search; and

an output subsystem for directly or indirectly returning the search results to the enquirer enquiry device.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Previously presented) A system according to claim 21, wherein the first database subsystem comprises a database of traders and their locations.

24-30. (Cancelled)

31. (Previously presented) A system according to claim 21, wherein the second database subsystem comprises a database of local traders including their location and contact details of their on-line database systems, the search subsystem being arranged to consult the database of local traders and then contact the on-line database systems of the

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traders that are determined as being within the geographical coverage set for the search and trading in items at least of the general type relevant to the enquiry.

32. (New) A method according to claim 1, wherein where the first location-dependent database search attributes more than one functional significance to the enquiry-device location, the functional significance that is more specific in nature is selected as the functional significance for the enquiry-device location.

33. (New) A system according to claim 21, wherein the first database subsystem is arranged such that where the first location-dependent database search attributes more than one functional significance to the enquiry-device location, the functional significance that is more specific in nature is selected as the functional significance for the enquiry-device location.

34. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the functional significances include at least two of the following:

- (a) shop;
- (b) shopping area;
- (c) airport;
- (d) motorway; and
- (e) road.

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35. (New) The system of claim 21, wherein the functional significances include at least two of the following:

- (a) shop;
- (b) shopping area;
- (c) airport;
- (d) motorway; and
- (e) road.